

Living in a GHC

Staying Connected as We Age

*As individuals, and as a society, we have everything to gain,
and everything to lose, in how well or how poorly we manage
our need for human connection.*

- Cacioppo & Patrick (2009)

Overview

This conference is designed to highlight the needs and challenges of staying socially connected for both younger retirees and more frail and/or mobility-restricted older persons. There will be a focus on ways to enable elders to stay connected through the end of life. The Hope Meadows program, where older adults maintain established relationships through their roles as indispensable companions, colleagues, mentors, and “grandparents,” will be featured, along with other Hope-inspired programs.

The challenge: Staying connected

Given the current demographic, economic, and social changes occurring in the United States, a viable option is desperately needed to encourage the connectedness of older adults. Our society is not physically capable of providing a professional care environment for every future elder, nor would every elder want one. Nevertheless, our society has consistently increased its focus upon professional care and services to support them through all aspects of life and death. The result is that many of our elders are physically, socially, and psychologically isolated. The irony is that they want and even need to be engaged, to have their lives still have purpose from one day to the next. In other words, they want and need to stay connected. Social connectedness and community involvement are two of the most powerful determinates of health and well-being, while loneliness hastens age-related declines. Nonetheless, the idea of promoting connectedness is rarely discussed as a specific intervention strategy necessary to support aging well.

Generations of Hope has been at the forefront of innovation in the connectedness and network embeddedness of older adults since the establishment of its flagship site, Hope Meadows, in 1994. Hope Meadows is an intentional neighborhood that is both a place where people live and a program dedicated to the support of vulnerable populations; it offers older adults extraordinary opportunities to build vital relationships as they age in community, and to remain valued and needed even as their mobility declines and frailty increases.

Open House at Hope Meadows

For those who can come early, we are planning an optional tour of Hope Meadows on Thursday November 10th from about 10:30 to 2:30.

Conference sessions

The proposed day-and-a-half conference, to begin at 4pm on November 10th, will include sessions on programming for older adults at Hope Meadows and other Hope-inspired sites, the Hope House Project, and the public policy landscape for older adults aging in community.

- ***Senior Program***

For older adults, living in an intentional intergenerational community like Hope Meadows becomes more than a place to live; it becomes a way to live. The senior program components provide opportunities for active engagement and social connectedness allowing friendships with children and their parents, as well as with each other to flourish. A panel of older adults who are residents of Hope Meadows and other Hope-inspired sites will share their stories of living in a GHC and staying connected. We will make available a paper that describes the senior program at Hope Meadows.

- ***Hope House Project***

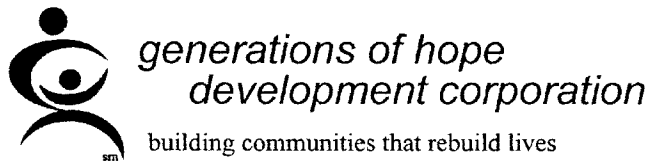
Unfortunately, due to existing architectural, programming, and medical service limitations, not all Hope seniors have been able to remain at Hope Meadows for as long as they would have wanted. To help ensure that older adults are able to remain at Hope Meadows through the end of life, we have begun the Hope House Project. This project will allow the older adults at Hope Meadows to age in community and provides a vision of what aging in our society can be—one of hope not despair, integration not isolation, and purpose not pointlessness. The physical and social architecture as well as program modifications to meet increasing medical needs will be discussed as they facilitate staying connected.

- ***GHC Older Adults and Public Policy***

This session will introduce older adults living in GHCs as an object of social policy. This will be a first attempt to define the policy landscape for GHC elders. The topic is important because of the indispensable role older people play in making a GHC work. The older adults at Hope Meadows are changing the face of aging every day by embracing the aging process with wisdom, independence, experience, humor, and curiosity. Equally important, they are involved in the betterment of society through their active community engagement. This session will examine existing policy and policy trends to assess how they may foster or hinder aging well in a GHC.

- ***GHDC update***

Brenda Krause Eheart and her staff will provide an overview of GHDC activities—what is happening now, where, and why. This will consist of current information on GHC initiatives, including a focus on various social challenges being addressed by these sites and the role of older residents. We also will present current federal initiatives; the GHC Collaborative including how it is connecting older adults across sites; and collaborative research efforts for evaluation purposes. We will conclude with our plans for moving forward.



**2011 Generations of Hope Development Corporation
Conference Registration Form**
November 10 – 11, 2011

I Hotel and Conference Center
1900 South First Street
Champaign, Illinois 61820

Living in a GHC: Staying Connected as We Age

Name Badge and Mailing Information (use a separate form for each person)

Name _____

Title _____

Institution/Organization _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____ Fax _____ E-mail _____

<p>Registration Fee*: \$100 Registration Deadline: October 21st Optional: Tour of Hope Meadows on November 10 (10 am – 2 pm): \$25 (includes transportation and lunch)</p> <p>We advise you to register early as conference size will be limited.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>*Registration fee includes dinner on November 10, breakfast and lunch on November 11</p>	<p>Attendees are responsible for their own transportation and hotel costs.</p> <p>We have reserved a block of hotel rooms at the I Hotel at a discounted rate. Please call 1-217-819-5000 and mention GHDC to make your reservation.</p> <p>All hotel reservations must be made by October 21st to get the group rate of \$105.00.</p> <p>Please mail this form and payment to: Generations of Hope Development Corporation Attention: Joyce Blair 609 West University Avenue Champaign, IL 61820</p>
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The Retirement Research Foundation
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